

JUN 5 1961

Front
PageEdit
PageOther
Page

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Eisenhower Takes New Aim

Taking former President Eisenhower's speech to Republican money-raisers in Washington as the jumping off point for resumed political fighting, we count four months and 12 days since the January inauguration. That is a little less than some early Republican suggestions had indicated (there were many guesses of about six months), but the point is not important.

For there's a good deal of artificiality, and a touch of phoniness, to such periods of so-called political peace — and on both sides. What have "Ev and Charlie" been doing but fighting? Have Republicans in Congress been waiting for a declaration of war? Anybody kept an eye on those party publications that pour out of the GOP headquarters? Mr. Eisenhower has kept quiet, but not many others have.

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Perhaps that is why Mr. Eisenhower, when he did open up, followed the example of the limerick hero who "leaped from his cell/ With a hell of a yell." The applause counters say he was interrupted more times—52 by one count—than in any speech he made from 1953 to January 19, 1961. The

picture of Mr. Eisenhower, ill at ease in the political world while in the White House, but at home when in the opposition, has its fascinations and its puzzles.

The text discloses a keener sharpness in tone, spirit, and phrase than in idea, program, and policy. Mr. Eisenhower assumed from the start that "our party's record, at home and abroad, [is] an excellent springboard into the future." What he said in amplification was mainly a matter of opposition in degree rather than in substance.

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That was true even when, turning to domestic affairs, Mr. Eisenhower started off with "Here, for America's sake, we take sharp issue with the leadership now in power." Thereafter the key words were "excessive," "rampant," "federalized," and "immoral." The real climax came in Mr. Eisenhower's vain search "for fiscal responsibility." If he keeps hammering on that theme, he may well rally a formidable public support.

One surprise with piquant possibilities came to light. Mr. Eisenhower paid "my personal tribute to the United States Joint Chiefs of

Staff, all the members of which body I have known long and well," and added warm compliments. If this was a profession of confidence after Cuba, it raises an issue of whether Mr. Eisenhower was distinguishing between the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which he praised, and the Central Intelligence Agency, which he ignored.

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A day later the Republicans had a new national chairman, Rep. William E. Miller, a 10-year congressman from the Buffalo-Niagara-Erie part of upper New York. Our Mr. O'Neill characterized him on this page last week as representing the school of thought that holds a national chairman should be more than a "mere" money-raiser and organizer. He should, this school holds, speak for the party on policy.

That is what Mr. Eisenhower has begun to do and what Mr. Nixon, Governor Rockefeller, Senator Goldwater, and of course Senator Dirksen and Representative Halleck have been doing or can be counted on to do. Just the same Mr. Miller, at 47 and on the rise, will make his weight felt in the business of putting Republican criticism into Republican votes.